



**For Immediate Release
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**CAPE COD RAIL TRAIL PARKING LOT
TO BE CONVERTED TO NEW TRAILSIDE PICNIC AREA**

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today announced that has closed the small four-car parking lot on the Cape Cod Rail Trail located at Hinckley's Pond across from the Pleasant Lake General Store in Harwich, and will convert the lot into a picnic area.

DCR is currently working on a design for the picnic area, which will include picnic tables and bike racks. In addition to providing another amenity for users of the popular rail trail, the new configuration will also allow DCR to address the erosion in this area, which has been occurring due to drainage problems.

This lot closure is not expected to have a major impact on rail trail uses, as there are two other nearby parking areas, at Headwaters Drive in Harwich, one half-mile away, and on Long Pond Road in Brewster, three miles away.

The closure of the parking lot was deemed necessary due to traffic safety concerns: a guardrail recently placed in the parking lot as a safety measure to protect rail trail users from cars exiting and entering the lot has made it necessary for vehicles to back out onto Route 124 due to a lack of space to turn around in the lot. Route 124 has difficult sight lines, thus placing these motorists at increased risk of an accident.

After review of the situation, DCR has determined that removal of the guard rail is not a viable option, as it would have a negative impact on safety for trail users, an unacceptable compromise.

The Cape Cod Rail Trail runs 22 miles from Dennis to Wellfleet, and is one of the most popular bike paths in New England. DCR recently completed rehabilitation work on a 10-mile portion of the trail between Dennis and Brewster, which included trail widening and the installation of numerous new safety features. Comparable rehabilitation work on the remainder of the trail will begin in September, and is scheduled to be completed in June 2007.

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